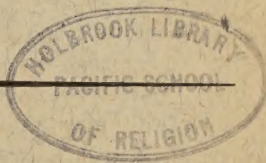


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EDITORIAL NOTE

We are happy to announce that the Revd. William Stewart, Principal of Serampore College, is to join our Editorial Board as its Chairman, in place of Dr. Abraham. We also express our gratitude to Dr. Abraham for the work he has done as Chairman of the Board and send him our good wishes in his retirement in Kerala. He has consented to remain as a member of the Editorial Board.

St. John's Discourse on the Bread of Life with special reference to Jn. 6 : 52-59

E. SAMBAYYA

St. John 6:52-59 is a difficult passage. In understanding these verses one is often tempted either to seek too simple a solution by explaining it metaphorically, divesting it of all sacramental significance, or to make the 'hard saying' easy by resorting to a solely Eucharistic interpretation. But there is no easy way out. We have to hold in balance the two sayings of our Lord: '... Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in yourselves' (53); and 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life' (63): and arrive at a line of interpretation.

GENERAL PERSPECTIVE OF THE DISCOURSE

The sixth chapter of St. John conforms to the general pattern of an episode followed by a discourse purporting to elucidate the meaning of the incident (in this case the miracle of the feeding of the multitude); and concluding with an appendix or epilogue (66-71). Taking its start with the miracle of the loaves and fishes the discourse moves on steadily, exposing the inadequacy of the conception of Messiah as a second Moses who gave manna from heaven, and finally confronts the Jews in the crudest manner possible with the necessity of belief in the historical Jesus. Here St. John, while answering the Gnostic and Docetic attacks on the reality of the Incarnation, warns his readers about the dangers of a crude and materialistic interpretation of the Eucharist. As against the former he emphasizes the reality of Christ's 'flesh', i.e. the Incarnate life, and His 'blood', i.e. the atoning sacrifice; and as against the latter he stresses the need of a lively faith as the only means by which Christ's 'flesh' and 'blood' can be appropriated to become the food of the soul. Those who partake of this true food gain abiding union with Him. Some of the expressions used in the discourse are intelligible only in the light of Eucharistic experience. It should, however, be noticed that the

sacramental references are brought in parenthetically. While St. John does not want to 'spiritualize' the sacraments he is concerned about rooting their efficacy in the material, and the material in the real humanity of our Lord. The author is troubled by those who refused to believe that the Son of God had come in the flesh and wanted a purely 'spiritual' religion. He wants to show that the Incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus are a prolegomenon not only for the eating of the flesh and drinking of the blood but also for the understanding of what that eating and drinking means. Taken as a whole the discourse is neither a piece of teaching on the Eucharistic practice of the Christians, nor an anti-sacramental preachment in favour of 'spiritual' communion. The real theme of the discourse appears to be faith and unbelief. But the discourse as a whole, the third section in particular, is couched in Eucharistic language. St. John's doctrine of 'feeding on Christ' is a spiritual and mystical doctrine; yet by 51b-58 he means to suggest that at any rate one of the methods of this feeding on Christ is through the sacrament of the Holy Communion. The language of the discourse is Eucharistic, and was understood as such from the second century.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISCOURSE

The sixth chapter opens with the episode of the feeding of the multitude in its traditional setting. 'Now the passover, the feast of the Jews, was at hand' (4) forms a theological introduction to the story. It was against the background of the passover, when the Jews feasted on the paschal lamb, that Jesus fed the people, and announced that He was the bread of life and that the bread He would give was His flesh. This cannot fail to remind the Christian reader that the Christian passover is the Eucharist. The narrative of the feeding is given in significant language. 'Jesus took the loaves; and having given thanks, he distributed to them' (11). Here the word used is *εὐχαριστήσας*. Again the phrase 'after the Lord had given thanks' in verse 23 picks up the sacramental reference. In verse 12 'Gather up the broken pieces which remain over' the words *συναγάγετε* and *κλάσματα* are generally used of gathering up of the Eucharistic remains.

The discourse which follows aims at showing that the only way to life is through belief in Jesus, a belief involving continuous feeding on Jesus of Nazareth, i.e. perpetual communion with Him. This is developed in three stages.

(i) Verses 26-34 is the discourse on the bread of life parallel to the one on the water of life in the fourth chapter. People come to Jesus seeking Him because they want something which He alone can give. Jesus reveals to the Galilean crowd certain deep mysteries in course of which He refers to Himself as 'bread of life'. Life can be sustained only by 'eating' this bread. But what does this 'eating' mean? Is it Spiritual communion, or does it indicate sacramental eating? Further, why was a syna-

gogue in Capernaum chosen for imparting this teaching on the living bread? We do not know. But it has been suggested that St. John was concerned about removing certain magical and crudely materialistic notions about the Eucharist. For such a purpose the scene of the Last Supper was not considered a suitable occasion, but the synagogue the traditional centre for instruction. Even though the Last Supper with its institution of the Eucharist is not recorded in this Gospel, it is presumed throughout; and the discourse is full of echoes of the Lord's Supper. In the Synoptic Gospels the story of the Last Supper begins with the mention of passover and concludes with the announcement of the treachery of Judas. In the same manner the discourse on the bread of life is given in the context of the feast of passover and ends with the mention of Judas Iscariot (71). We cannot help noticing the similarity between the narrative of the Last Supper and that of the chapter on the living bread. The first stage of the discourse ends with the people's request for the bread of life: 'Lord, evermore give us this bread' (34).

(ii) The second part of the discourse is embraced by verses 35-51 and is summed up in the words 'I am the living bread . . . the bread which I shall give ($\delta\acute{\omega}\sigma\omega$) is my flesh'. Thus a new idea is introduced at this point. Jesus has been speaking of the bread of life as coming down from heaven. Now He speaks of the bread as His flesh, and of feeding on Him as 'eating' His flesh and 'drinking' His blood. The Jews who have already found it difficult to accept Jesus as the bread come down from heaven are scandalized by the further suggestion that Jesus was to give them His flesh to eat.

'I am the living bread' (51a) is an idea parallel to the expression 'living water' and conveys the teaching that He as the living One imparts life to those who seek Him. This leads on to a more difficult idea 'the bread which I will give is my flesh, for ($\acute{\upsilon}\pi\acute{\epsilon}\rho$) the life of the world' (51b). The gift that is promised is His perfect humanity. The central idea of the fourth Gospel is 'the word became flesh'. Therefore there can be no belief in Jesus as Saviour apart from the acknowledgement that He has come in the flesh. The preposition $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\acute{\epsilon}\rho$ in the phrase 'for the life of the world' means 'on behalf of the world's life' and hints at the atoning death of Jesus Christ which is made evident by the mention of His blood.

(iii) Verses 52-58 are the concluding section of the discourse on the living bread. Verse 59 is the formal conclusion: 'These things he said in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.' This passage contains an indirect answer to the question raised in 52, 'How can this man give us his flesh to eat?' The answer is given in sacramental terms. Appropriation of our Lord's humanity is the theme of this section. Eating and drinking Christ's flesh and blood is not the same thing as faith, though faith is the means of it. It is an actual and vital union with Christ's Incarnate life, whereby the believer dwells in Christ and

Christ in him, and the benefits of Christ's passion are communicated to him. 'How can this man give us his flesh?' elicits the answer that it is through His sacrificial death that Jesus becomes the food of the faithful. 'This is my body which is broken for you . . . this cup is the new covenant in my blood.' These Eucharistic words of Jesus seem to lie behind 'the hard saying' contained in this part of the discourse. The Eucharistic feast has its origin in the sacrificial death of the Son of Man. It is at once a commemoration of the sacrifice once offered; and it also communicates its benefits to those who partake with faith. To eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood is as necessary for salvation as belief on Him. The primary reference here is to faith in the historic Incarnation; but the realistic imagery employed here points to the Eucharist which ought not to be evaded. The body or the flesh of Jesus refers to the Incarnate life which was broken for us on the Cross, and the blood is His life which was triumphant in and through that self-offering. Hence we receive the Holy Communion in two kinds: the body *and* the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The unusual Greek word *τρώγων* used instead of the common *ἐσθίων* in verse 54 calls for comment. In this passage *τρώγων* is used four times. It is also used in 13:18. In this instance, while quoting Ps. 4:9, St. John changes *ἐσθίων* of the LXX into *τρώγων*. It seems to be the habit of the fourth Evangelist to use *τρώγων* for *ἐσθίω* in the context of the Last Supper or the Eucharist. It is an unusual word meaning munching or eating audibly and is used of animals as they graze in the field. While *τρώγων* also means eating with relish it is seldom used of eating flesh. The saying 'unless you munch and eat with enjoyment the flesh of the Son of Man, etc.' makes the saying more provocative and harder to understand. In view of such crude language employed there is little room left for a 'spiritual' interpretation of the passage in question. The eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of the Son of Man involves a real physical eating and drinking as in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Eucharistic food and drink are physically bread and wine and spiritually flesh and blood of the Saviour. Together they form the means of the spiritual sustenance of the believer.

FLESH AND BODY

It is sometimes argued in favour of an exclusively spiritual interpretation of the passage that whereas in the Synoptic Gospels the first species of the sacrament is called 'body', the fourth Gospel refers to it as 'flesh'. Therefore 'flesh' here means the person of Jesus to be appropriated by faith, but not the 'body' relating to the rite of the Lord's Supper, to be taken into the mouth and eaten. There is some substance to this contention, because the accounts of the Lord's Supper in the Synoptic Gospels and in 1 Cor. XI use the words 'body' and 'blood', rather than

'flesh and blood'. Seeing that 'flesh and blood' means personality in its totality inclusive of the bodiliness, it is argued that the expression 'eating and drinking the body and blood of Jesus' legitimately means appropriating Him by faith. But closer investigation into the usage of the terms *σῶμα* and *σάρξ* does not bear this out.

Here we may recall the conclusions of the study made by Prof. Jeremias of the Eucharistic words of Jesus. The words used by our Lord at the institution of the Eucharist were 'this is my body ; this is my blood'. Here *σῶμα* and *σάρξ* constitute a twin concept on the lips of Jesus, but the Aramaic equivalent of *σῶμα* is not easy to come by. *Gūph* cannot be regarded as the equivalent of *σῶμα*, for it is nowhere coupled with *αἷμα*. The Aramaic twin concept corresponding to the Greek *σῶμα-αἷμα* is *bāsār-dām* (flesh and blood) as in Ezk. 39:17. This is the only pair of words that can be considered appropriate to Jesus' word of interpretation. Linguistically there can be no objection that the Aramaic word *bāsār* underlies *σῶμα* in Jesus' word of interpretation. The LXX in 143 cases translates *bāsār* by *σάρξ* and only in 23 cases by *σῶμα*. Rom. 8:13 uses *σῶμα* and *σάρξ* interchangeably. The Syriac version renders 51*b* as 'the bread which I shall give is my *body* for the life of the world'. The Syriac versions rendered *σάρξ* wherever it occurred in the sixth chapter of St. John by the Syriac word *pagar* which is the rendering of *σῶμα* in the Synoptic accounts of the Lord's Supper. The Syriac Church's translation of the sixth chapter of St. John is such that a Eucharistic reference is unmistakable. In all probability the Aramaic words of Jesus at the Last Supper were '*dēn bisri*' (flesh) and '*dēn 'idhmi*' (blood). Further St. John is committed to the employment of *σάρξ* by reason of his momentous statement *καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο* in 1:14. Thus the substitution of *σάρξ* for *σῶμα* becomes easily understandable.

SPIRIT AND TRUTH

Now we come to the appendix of the discourse on the bread of life, 60-69. The whole contrast between the bread that perishes and the true bread is summed up by the saying 'It is the spirit that quickeneth ; the flesh profiteth nothing'. Yet the eternal *λόγος* was made flesh and through it established communion with man. The idea of attaining eternal life by feeding upon the flesh of the Son of Man may be scandalous to the non-Christian readers of St. John. It can, however, be rightly understood by those who know the descent as well as the ascent of Christ. It is after ascension that the Holy Spirit will make them partakers of the flesh, and they will receive it by faith. What imparts the power of everlasting life to those who feed upon the flesh of Jesus is not the flesh as such but the spirit which pervades it. In this passage no contrast is intended to be established between flesh and spirit or matter and spirit. When flesh is

penetrated by the Spirit of God it becomes the life-giving bread. (Thus in St. John the doctrine of the sacraments is closely related to that of the Spirit.) Meanwhile the words of Christ are spirit and life. There is a real difficulty in interpreting verse 63. But there is no contradiction for St. John between the statement that life comes through feeding upon the flesh and blood of Christ, and the saying that His words are life and truth. When our Lord said, 'It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing', He is stating the truth in its general form using the same contrast as in 3:6. In every case is it true that flesh without spirit cannot impart life. All the same the saying has some bearing on the contrast between the carnal and the spiritual apprehension of Christ, and on the spiritual and sacramental participation of the Incarnate Lord. The ascension of Jesus which is the final spiritualizing of the person of our Lord will remove the stumbling block in apprehending His spiritual humanity.

'The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life.' The question here is whether τὰ ῥήματα refers to the words of Christ in general or to what He has been saying about His flesh and blood. It is possible to hold that it is the life-giving quality of His message as the word of God which Jesus has symbolized as food and drink. It seems equally cogent to say (with Archbishop Bernard) that it refers to the words He had been speaking to them, and to which they took exception, which are Spirit and Life; because they are the key words of His teaching about Himself and Salvation.

It is, however, to be noticed that the revelation of eternal life is given to us in the union of the word and deed, i.e. the Incarnation and the Atonement. It is not only His words that give life, but Himself is the life laid down for the world, His body and blood freely given for all. Eternal life is communicated to men, and appropriated by them by hearing and believing the word of the cross on the one hand, and by the sacramental eating on the other; the word and the sacrament.

Whether the metaphor is water or bread we are in this Gospel dealing with a process by which the believer takes into himself the divine life and by an inward change makes it his own so that he actually has 'God abiding in him'. Thus sacramentalism is a part and parcel of Johannine Christianity and has a definite place in chapters three and six, though it is introduced by way of parenthesis. He who believes is baptized; and he who verifies the words of Christ partakes of the sacrament of the body and blood of the Saviour.



'Dr. Kenneth Cragg's Call of the Minaret is more relevant to the Christian-Hindu conversation than anything I have yet read.'

(C. Murray Rogers in Religion and Society)

Ancient Religions of the Fertile Crescent—and the Sanathana Dharma

K. V. MATHEW

The Old Testament is the record of the progressive revelation of God. To a keen student of the Old Testament the fact of revelation is depicted in the historical accounts of the religions of Canaan, which trace their origin in the religions of Central Asia. The secular history of ancient Europe and Asia shows that the philosophical and cultural history of man was formed in the regions round about the valleys of Euphrates and Tigris. Recent excavations of the archaeologists support the claim of history and of the Biblical accounts. It is really astonishing to see the close similarities between the primitive religions of Canaan and the religions of Persia, India, Africa and Europe. Therefore, one is led on to study more closely the religions of the East, in the light of the facts revealed in the Bible. It ultimately leads one to a deeper and fuller understanding of the revelation of God through the history of man's civilization.

NOMADIC TRIBES OF CENTRAL ASIA

The chief clans and tribes of the world take their origin from the regions of Central Asia. We understand this in the light of the Flood story of the Bible. Parallels have been found in the mythological tales of Australia, India, Polynesia, Tibet and Lithuania. Are they mere legends? Or different versions of the same event? As the nations spread from their common origin the Flood story also followed them and later adopted circumstantial forms and patterns. The deluge that took place in the great rivers of Tigris and Euphrates covered the whole then known civilized world. The Bible also truly records the same event. (Gen. 7:19.)

Until 1921, O.T. scholars questioned the credibility of the Flood story. But Dr. Woolley and his companions began excavations at the ancient site of Ur, a railway station 120 miles north of Basra, near the Persian Gulf. For six years they struggled at Tell-el-Muqayyar, the Ur of the ancient world. Finally, they

reached a stratum of clay about 10 feet in depth. It was the layer of the deluge, they concluded, that covered the face of the civilized world in *circa* 4000 B.C. Soon after the deluge, life again sprang from the same region and began to spread over the space of the world. The Gilgamesh Epic has its deluge version with Utnapistim as the hero, whose counterpart we see in the Bible. As they scattered, cultural and philosophical development also followed. The following Biblical table of genealogy will show us the relation between the principal tribes:

NOAH

<i>Shem</i> (Eastern) (Gen. 10: 22)	<i>Ham</i> (Southern) (Gen. 10: 6)	<i>Japheth</i> (Northern) (Gen. 10: 2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Elam (Elamites) Asshur (Assyrians) Arpachshad (Shela-Eber-Hebrews) Lud (Lydian) Aram (Syrians) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cush (Ethiopians) Mizraim (Egyptians—Dravidians) Put (an African tribe) Canaan (Canaanites) Zidon (Zidonians) Heth (Hittites) Jebusites Amorites Hivites (Horites—<i>Xoppaioi</i>—Hurrians—Aryans) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gomer (Gomorians) Magog (a Central Asian clan) Madai (Medes) Javan (Greeks) Tubal (North Palestinian) Meshech Tiras

Mesopotamia (region between the Rivers) was the centre of the changing patterns of culture. The Noachic tribes were nomads and they wandered from one place to another. Ur, which can be interpreted as the place of origin, was the earliest city of civilization. In the last quarter of the third millennium B.C. the inhabitants of Ur moved from there to northern countries and to the West and to the East. They were generally known by the name 'Habirus' (wanderers). Abraham, the 'Son' (descendant) of Terah, was a chieftain of the Habirus. Excavations at Mari provide us with ample evidences to this fact. One of the Egyptian records bears the name 'Apiru' which, of course, denotes the Habirus. O.T. scholarship has agreed now to include Hebrews also in the Habiru groups but it hesitates to identify all Habirus as Hebrews. From the above table of genealogy it is clear that all the tribes after the deluge were of one stock. But the Hebrews are of the Semite race (Eastern) and the Canaanites, the Egyptians and the Hivites are of the Hamite race (Southern) and the Greeks and the Medes are of the Japhetite race (Northern).

CANAANITES

For our particular observation let us proceed with the Hamite race, the southern group. Egyptians belong to this line. It is generally assumed by the anthropologists, after due consideration and examination of Egyptian mummies and culture, that the Dravidians of South India take their origin from the Egyptians

who in turn trace their ancestry from Central Asia. The Canaanites were a fraternal race of the Egyptians. The land of Canaan derived its name from the people who dwelt in the land. The Canaanites settled not only in Palestine but in other regions of the Mediterranean and of Central Asia. Before the arrival of the Semites, the Canaanite tribes, the Amorites and the Hittites, entered into Palestine. When Abraham, the Hebrew (Gen. 15:13), came into Canaan from Ur, he saw Canaanites dwelling in the land. The Prophet Ezekiel refers to the children of Israel by saying 'the Amorite was thy father, thy mother was an Hittite' (Ezek. 16:3).

HIVITES (Gen. 10:16)

Recent excavations of the archaeologists at Nuzu have thrown considerable light on the history and culture of the tribe called 'Hurrians'. It is their firm opinion that the Hivites of the Bible truly represent the Hurrians or the Horites. The word in Hebrew is probably a slip of a copyist. In the LXX this tribe is mentioned as 'Chorraioi' which in turn comes in English as Hurrians. The change of the consonant is due to the inability of the Greek language to transcribe the guttural of the Hebrew. The same transformation occurs when it is written in other languages also. Hugo Winckler, an eminent scholar, suggests that the Hurrians of the Nuzu tablets are the 'Aryans'. We can agree with him because the history and culture of the Hurrians revealed in the Hurrian text unearthed from Nuzu, the Horite city, bear witness to several customs, practices and names identical with those of the Aryans of India. The excavations at Tell-el-Amarna in 1887 also support this view. A letter written by a Canaanite chieftain to the Pharaoh of Egypt in Akkadian, which was the diplomatic language of that era, reads: 'To the king, my Lord, my Sun, my God, say: Thus (says) Suwardata, thy servant, the servant of the king and the dust under his feet, the ground on which thou dost tread: At the feet of the king, my Lord, the Sun of Heaven, seven times, seven times I prostrated myself, on my belly and on my back . . .' This is just the introduction of the letter. The matter of the same runs . . . 'the king, my Lord, should know that the Hapiru have risen in the lands which the God of the king, my Lord, has given me, and that I have beaten them, and the king, my Lord, should know that all my brothers have left me: and I and Abdu-Kheba alone are left to fight against the leader of the Hapiru. And Zurata, prince of Acco (Jud. 1:31), and Indaruta, prince of Achshaph (Josh. 11:1), were the ones who hastened to my help in return for 50 chariots of which I have now been deprived . . .' (p. 145, *Bible as History*, Keller).

The name of the author of this letter, Suwardata, prince of Hebron, clearly indicates his Indo-Aryan ancestry. Indaruta also belongs to the same descent. Keller refers also to the names of Biryawaza of Damascus, Biridiya of Megiddo, Widiya of Askelon and Birashehena of Shechem in Samaria. Very many

similar names are found in early Indian history. The king Abdu-kheba was of Horrite origin.

Apart from the similarities in names, there are several philological and religious affinities between these two races. Grousseau says, 'the Aryans of primitive times have been completely devoid of religion', and ascribes the uniformity of their myths and worship, almost in the same way as Creuzer, to the enormous number of religious forms that they borrowed from western Asia and Egypt and transferred to Greece, India, Middle and North Europe (p. 13, *Encyclop. of Rel. and Eth.*, Vol. II). According to Grousseau, it is clear that the Aryans were a race who borrowed their religious pattern from western Asia and Egypt. The Horites, settled partly in Edom in the first quarter of the second millennium B.C., trace their origin from Mesopotamia. The Hurrians are referred to in the early records of the third dynasty of Ur (2070-1960 B.C.). They held both Syria and Assyria under subjection. The term Canaan finds its more satisfactory explanation when regarded as a Hurrian designation signifying 'belonging to the land of the purple'. The word 'Damascus' (Timash-ghi) also derived from the same source. The Hurrians were a conglomerate of several groups. All this suggests that these two sections were, in the beginning of their cultural growth, one race. The Sanskrit and Greek words like Gandarva—Kentauros, Maruths—maruts (Lat.), Varuna—ouranos, Manu—minos, Deotheos—deus support our arguments.

The discovery of an Egyptian papyrus (fifteenth century B.C.) reveals the name 'Khuru' for Canaan, after the name Hurri of the Bible (Jud. 3:3; Josh. 11:3). The names of the Hurrian texts indicate that at least the princely caste must be reckoned as Indo-Aryan. Queen Hatshepsut of Egypt writes in one of her annals that Asians had already been in her capital. Egyptians called South Palestine by the names 'Huru', 'Khari', 'Khuri', 'Khurli'. They were not first Semites but were semitized after their settlement, through brotherly kinship with the Semites. By the fifteenth century B.C. they settled in Ugarit. When the Hyksos began to invade Egypt, the Hebrews and the Horites joined with them. 'Two Egyptian words for chariots are borrowed from a Semitic and Hurrian root' (Prof. Speiser). All this suggests that the nomadic Habirus of Central Asia slowly began to wane in their influence on the regions throughout, in the second millennium B.C. The Central Asian tribes were known by the generic name 'Habirus' at first and later adopted different names signifying their fundamental ethnic unity, viz. Hurrians, Aryans, Horrites, Khru, Apiru, Hebrews, Arabs, Aurachim. Probably the name 'Aryan' is derived from the word Ur, the original place of their habitation.

RELIGION OF THE CANAANITES

To get a full picture of the religious practices of the Canaanites we have to go through the religious history of the pri-

mitive Noachic tribes. Apart from the Biblical records, archaeology is always at our disposal to provide us with materials. As we go through the customs and practices we come to the realization of the fact of the oneness of the Aryan religion with the Canaanite religion, from which the O.T. takes its shape as a fulfilment and a realization of the world religions, especially of the 'Sanathana Dharma' of Hindustan.

CANAANITE GODS

Among these tribes, 'El' was the supreme god. He held a high position among the gods. The form of the name was slightly changed and used among different nations, e.g. El (Heb.), El (Sam.), Elon (Phoen.), Illu (Assyr.), Allatu (goddess) and Elattu (goddess), Allah (god) (Aram., Arab.), Alele (Sansk., in the dialect of Pisachu). The Hebrew adopted the plural as well as the singular of the word to denote their moral god.

Baal was the chief god of fertility. He was known as Bel in Babylon. The polyandrous Istar became the wife of Baal under the name Astarte in Canaan. Most of the gods originated from mythology, which was the primitive form of philosophical speculation. The Ugaritic mythology strikes a happy medium between the Babylonian and Aegean. We find the names of Indian gods in a treaty between the Hittites and the Mittani. The Baal-epic of Ugarit depicts the goddess 'Anath'. 'With her might she mowed down the dwellers in the cities, she struck down the people of the sea-coasts, she destroyed the men of the East.' She drove men into her temple and closed the doors so that no one could escape. 'She hurled chairs at the youths, tables at the warriors, footstools at the mighty men. She waded up to the knees, up to the neck in blood. Human heads lay at her feet, human hands flew over her like locusts. She tied the heads of her victims as ornaments upon her back, their hands she tied upon her belt. Her liver was swollen with laughing, her heart was full of joy, the liver of Anath was full of exultation. When she was satisfied, she washed her hands in streams of human blood before turning again to other things' (p. 264, *Bible as History*, Keller). Indians who read this ancient epic of Ugarit will soon realize that the Anath of Ugarit was no one but the counterpart of 'Kālī' of India. Anath's image is engraved on stones as a naked goddess. The matriarchal system of the race was no doubt the reason for the origin of female gods in the primitive religions. They were naked and symbolized as the mother of all races.

Sacrifices were offered to these gods and goddesses. Children and virgins were offered. Similar human sacrifice has not been uncommon in the religion of India. To propitiate the gods, incense was burned, and wine and salt were offered before the idols upon high mountains. All the hills and mountains were regarded as sacred. In the Veda, we see references to the

offerings of Soma and Sura, two Indian sacred beverages, as equivalent to the wine of the nomadic religion.

A fertility cult was practised. Baal was the 'husband' of the land. He was procreator. The priests and temple women engaged in acts of immorality to symbolize and please the fertility gods and goddesses. The temples of the Aryan religion are no exception. Devadasis and sorcerer-priests are still to be seen at the gates of sacred temples, reminiscent of the 'Khodashim' of the ancient Aryan religion. In addition to this practice, phallic worship was also prevalent among some of the Canaanite tribes. The 'Ashera' images are, according to some scholars, symbols of fertility. They were usually found under green trees (Ezek. 16: 17; Jer. 17:2). The origin of the 'Linga worship' in India can certainly be found in the parallel customs of the ancient Hurrian race.

Sanctuaries, natural and artificial waters, trees, caves and stones were regarded as sacred and having divine power (e.g. Elon-Moreh-tree of revelation: Gen. 12:6). Some of the rivers in Syria were sacred and were called by the name 'Cadisha' (holy). Sidon and Kishon were holy rivers. Where shall we, Indians, go to find out the origins of the animistic religion, which we still find in the villages and hamlets, towns and cities under the banner of Sanathana Dharma, except to their original home in Central Asia? In India we have our Cadisha, sacred trees and stones. The worship of 'Nāga' also finds its parallel in the serpent worship of the nomads.

Reverence was also shown to domestic animals. They were regarded as friends and kinsmen. Agatharchides describes the Troglodytes nomads of E. Africa as those who hated the slaughter of domestic animals. 'Libyans usually ate flesh of the oxen, never of the cow' (Herodotus). In Egypt the cow was sacred to the 'Hathor-Isis' (cow goddess) and also among the Phoenicians. 'Gow-Mātā' is the Indian version of the old cow worship. In Mount Sinai, the Hebrews observed the worship of the bull of Egypt, which was the symbol of fertility. Canaan also carried on bull worship. The images of the garlanded bulls are not a rare scene of our towns and villages, which to the Sanathanists are gods and friends of gods.

The Sun-god was venerated and worshipped throughout the Central Asian region. It was, no doubt, another version of fire worship. 'Shemesh' was the head of the Heliopolitan ennead of Egypt. The word 'Surya' is probably a combination of 'Shu' (Sun) and 'Arya' (pious). The nomadic tribes depended largely on natural powers for their existence and therefore worshipped them as gods. The Jebusites of Jerusalem venerated the Sun-god. The temple was built on a rock on the top of the hill where the rising Sun-god revealed himself. It was only in the exile that the sun-cult was finally eradicated from the temple (Ezek. 8:3, 16). The chamber of 'Purvah' (shining house) is an old reminiscence of the sun-cult. The religion of India, which

absorbs all the forms and customs of worship, adds the Sun-god also to its pantheon.

THE SOCIAL CUSTOMS AND LEGAL USAGES OF HURRIANS

About 20,000 tablets were unearthed from Nuzu which give us a mass of information. The Hurrians were the best known community of the ancient world. Three tablets depict a complete picture of the life of the nomads who lived in 1500 B.C. in the Central Asian region. Women held an honourable position in the community. The practice of adoption was exercised among them; they were nominal and real adoptions. For marriage the paying of 'Mohar' or 'Terkhatu' was the custom. In Nuzu the regular dowry was 40 shekels of silver which might even be paid in instalments. The purpose of marriage was nothing but procreation. If the wife fails to give children to her husband she must provide her maid to him so that they may have the desired issue. She must not send her away. The treatment of Sarah with Hagar was illegal according to Hurrian Law. Levirate marriage seems to have been practised. The custom was prevalent among the Aryans, too. The blessings of the Patriarch, the stealing of Laban's household gods and the selling of the birth-right of Esau find parallels in the Hurrian texts. To become a slave one should make a hole in the ear (Exod. 21:6). Among Hindus we can see the same customs.

The Old Testament was written by those who lived against this background. The Hurrians or the Aryans were only a small section of the vast sea of nomads. The contents of the Old Testament, therefore, were largely moulded and presented to the Hebrews as a guide to know the true God who acted in the history of other nations, who was revealed to other people in diverse manners and was worshipped by them in different forms. The Old Testament is thus an adequate record of the religious philosophy of mankind. The socio-religious customs and practices prevalent in the nomadic tribes are recorded one by one in the O.T. But their inadequacy to satisfy the religious quest of man is shown. Hence the Old Testament reveals to mankind the attempt of man in different centuries to satisfy spiritual thirst: and life lived in the early periods of history thus provides a background and venue for the ultimate and final act of redemption through the historical revelation.

Some Indian Christians think that the Old Testament is inadequate to meet the spiritual needs of India and to prepare a way for the revelation of Christ. They emphasize and advocate the use of Indian sacred scriptures to make the way open for the religion of Christ. A study of primitive religions in the light of the O.T. and with the help of the archaeologists enables us to see the futility of their arguments. The scriptures of India take their inspiration and origin from the nomadic religions of Central Asia, of which the Bible gives us a true picture. They cannot

supersede the importance or validity of the Old Testament with regard to its authenticity as a true and correct record of the primitive religions of the world. The Old Testament is therefore the only reliable record that can help the seeker in India to understand the earliest revelations of God through the ancient religions of the world.

The gradual and progressive revelation of God continued through the history of man's civilization which originated in Central Asia, and finally culminated in one of the tribes, viz. the Hebrews: and they belonged to the great Noachic race, from whom all the civilized nations take their descent. The anthropological and topographical study of these nomads leads us to the truth that the election of 'a People' as the people of God, by the El of all the nations, was in the redemptive plan of God for the whole world. The Jewish nation was a symbol of God's redemption and they were asked to be His witnesses to the entire world. God created man on the earth. They began to spread from the Fertile Crescent. God intervened in history in the same place. One of the races was called out to be His messenger, as His servant. When the servant failed to carry out the errand of the salvation of God, He Himself came down to preach the Kingdom of God, Repentance and Forgiveness. El is the God of all the nations. He is Iswar and Allah. He is the One who calls men to be reconciled with God through Jesus Christ, His Perfect manifestation on earth. His claim is universal, for the universe belongs to Him. The West and the East, the South and the North meet in Christ, find in Christ a synthesis of all philosophies and religions. Sanathana Dharma finds its perfection in Christ, for without Him it is only a philosophy of man. The Word became flesh to sum up everything, even the religions, in Christ.

'For the first time, three candidates are preparing for the M.Th. Degree in the History of Religions. The first candidate to attempt the degree in Old Testament sat for the examination in November after studying partly at Serampore and partly at Bangalore. And at this time, with eight registered candidates studying in various centres, we have evidence that the value of this course is really beginning to be appreciated.'

*(1959 Convocation Report of the President
of the Senate of Serampore College)*

Unity, Catholicity and Wholeness

M. P. JOHN

The quest for unity, in the Church as well as in the world, is one of the most distinctive characteristics of the modern age. As far as the Church is concerned, it is seen partly in the ecumenical movement, which the late Archbishop William Temple called 'the great new fact of our time'. In the realm of thought, 'the gift of the catholic vision' has been described by Prof. H. Richard Niebuhr as the greatest of God's gifts to the theology of the present day. Ecumenical movement has brought a new and intensified denominationalism, but the older type of denominational theology, which could complacently shut its eye to other types of thought, or could see them merely as systems to be opposed, is definitely on the way out. There are differences of theological thought today, but they do not usually differ along denominational lines. There is no well-defined school of ecumenical theology, but any theologian of today must be alive to the new experience that the Church is passing through if his theology is to be valid and relevant.

In the light of the ecumenical movement and through the experience of those attempts towards 'visible' and organizational unity in the Church in various parts of the world, our concept of the Church's unity itself has deepened and widened. It is the purpose of this article to suggest very briefly something of the widened meaning of unity. This may be done by taking the related words, wholeness and catholicity, and seeing their relevance to the idea of unity.

Wholeness (from Greek *holos*), catholicity (from *kath' holos*) and ecumenicity (from *oikoumenē* meaning the whole inhabited world) are all words with related meanings. 'The idea of wholeness,' says Dr. Oliver S. Tomkins, 'expresses in English that same "catholicity" of the Church in the purpose of God.'¹ Perhaps the word catholicity would have been better than the word ecumenism if the former had not undergone a reduction or partial loss of meaning.

Wholeness is inseparable from unity. It is richer and deeper in meaning than the latter. In Biblical terminology the word

¹ O. S. Tomkins, *The Church in the Purpose of God*, p. 8.

'whole' is closely associated with the meanings of salvation and health. Wholeness implies health or well-being in the deepest sense and in the case of the Church, unity is essential to its well-being. Wholeness or catholicity must not only mean world-wide expansion, or suitability for all people, but must in the final analysis include the meaning of comprehension of all humanity and all phases of human activity within the saving activity of God revealed in Christ. Until the Church is the transforming society, coextensive with humanity, wholeness cannot be said to have been achieved.

Any discussion of the meaning of the Church's unity must refer to the Epistle to the Ephesians and to the final discourse and high priestly prayer in the Fourth Gospel. In these two places, more than anywhere else, we get a picture of the Church in its wholeness, unity, health, as it ought to be, as it *is* in the purpose of God. The oneness of the Church is derived from God. The Church is one because 'there is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us, who is above all and through all and in all'. The Church is 'his body, the fulness of him fills all in all' (Eph. 4:4-6; 1:23). To get the idea of wholeness we must take seriously the word 'all' which is repeated so often in the early chapters of Ephesians. In St. Paul's view the Church is the society in which the divided and partial societies of the past are united in a new creation. The middle wall of partition is broken down (2:24) and those who were separated are made one in the fellowship where Jew and Gentile alike are heirs, members of the body, partakers of the promises in Christ Jesus through the Gospel (3:6).

In the Fourth Gospel, the idea of the Church as being within the divine life is emphasized. The figure of the vine and the branches as well as the words, 'that they may all be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us' (17:21), bring out the idea that the Church maintains its healthy life by abiding in close relation to Godhead.

So far all the leading branches of the Church will agree. To refer only to two representative thinkers: M. J. Congar says that the Church is 'one with the very oneness of God, outside whom she does not exist . . . The Church is the community of souls living the very life which is the life of the Blessed Trinity because the object of their lives is the same as the life of God Himself'.² Karl Barth's words are equally emphatic: 'We have no right to explain the multiplicity of the churches at all.'³

Today we are in a situation in which we have to search for the unity which, we believe, has been given to the Church. Unity, wholeness is given, but we do not have it. We are not healthy; we are not whole. The gift of the catholic vision has

² *Divided Christendom*, pp. 51, 57-58.

³ *The Church and the Churches*, p. 40.

enabled the churches to see the impossible position in which they are. There is a new realization that unity is the will of God and that it is essential for the wholeness of the Church. Disunity is recognized as sin. Karl Barth puts the point forcibly: 'We have to deal with it (the multiplicity of the churches) as we deal with sin, our own and others, to recognize it as a fact, to understand it as the impossible thing which has intruded itself upon ourselves, without the power to liberate ourselves from it. We must not allow ourselves to acquiesce in its reality; rather we must pray that it be forgiven and removed, and be ready to do whatever God's will and command may enjoin in respect of it . . . The multiplicity of churches is simply our helplessness in His sight. We cannot listen for his voice, without an act of decision, choice, confession: yet we cannot decide and confess our faith without falling into separation and so coming into contradiction against Him. Who are we, and what is His Church, if that is our standing towards Him? We had best attempt to give no other answer than this, that we are those, that the Church is the congregation of those, who know that they are helpless in the presence of One who as their Saviour and their Lord is greater than they'.⁴

Congar, speaking from a very different theological point of view, is equally emphatic about the unfortunate character of the present situation in the Church. He says that separations form a melancholy series of landmarks in this history of Catholic Christianity. 'In the eleventh century East and West were separated: in the sixteenth century whole nations seceded, and the tale of schism goes on to our day. But the worst thing is that the separations have lasted and that their very persistence has become not only a matter of habit but a new motive for separate life. We have got into the habit of living without each other, as parallel lines of Christianity which never meet, each of which notwithstanding propounds to its faithful the commandment of our Lord, "If thou offer thy gift at the altar and there remember *that thy brother hath anything against thee*, leave thy offering before the altar and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift".'⁵

The same realization and mutual concern characterize many of the statements of the World Council of Churches. In the report of the Amsterdam Assembly we read: 'We come from Christian churches which have for long misunderstood, ignored and misinterpreted one another; we are all sinful men and we are heirs to the sins of our fathers . . . It is our common concern for (the Church) that draws us together, and in that concern we discover our unity in relation to her Lord and Head . . . We cannot rest with our present divisions. Before God, we are responsible for one another'.⁶

⁴ *The Church and the Churches*, pp. 40-41, 51-52.

⁵ M. J. Congar, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

⁶ Amsterdam Report, I, pp. 211, 217.

The lack of friendly relations and cooperation between denominations is much to be regretted, but the unity that we seek must go far beyond friendly coexistence. We cannot be satisfied with the idea that each of the denominations is, as it were, a branch of the main tree, and that the differences that separate the 'branches' are of no great significance. The differences that separate us are important. They prevent Christians from worshipping together; they prevent them from joining one another in the Lord's Supper. It is doubtful whether we can accept the suggestion that some churches are 'bridge churches' which mediate between extremes. The concept presupposes a grading and evaluating of churches so that they can be arranged in some scale or order.

There are some churches which, while cooperating, wholeheartedly or not, in the ecumenical movement, profess to believe and proclaim that they are the only true Church, maintaining the true faith and right practice in their wholeness. Prof. Zander speaks for the Orthodox Church: 'We must decisively proclaim the belief that our church contains absolute truth, and that all deviations from it are distortions of the Christian teaching. But we must not forget for a moment that members of other denominations take up exactly the same point of view with regard to their doctrines—which is perfectly right and proper if we recognize their existence at all. The oecumenical problem thus paradoxically combines mutually-exclusive principles, and there seems to be no way out of it. And yet the slightest attempt at compromise either destroys the very essence of oecumenism or replaces its tragic but gracious conflicts by the indifference of vague idealism'.⁷ It is impossible not to agree with Prof. Zander when he says that there seems to be no way out of it. Is it not more realistic to come together with the recognition that we are all sinful men and we are heirs of the sins of our fathers and that sin has entered into the interchurch relations as well as into some of the formulations of doctrine? It is perhaps true that the purpose of the ecumenical movement may be defeated if the churches are set first of all to a self-examination to see where in the past each has gone wrong. It is unlikely that, with the weight and wealth of tradition and social inheritance and historical situations that condition our thought, we will ever, separately, be able to arrive at an impartial judgment of our own past.

What, then, is our way in the search of wholeness and unity? Rome's way and to a great extent the way of the Eastern Orthodox Church is to look back to a unity that was real in the past, and to ask those who in their sight have 'gone away' from the fold to return. Rome talks of reunion. But return is impossible. Time moves only in one direction and it is impossible to go back in time. We stand in a context different from that

⁷ The Essence of Oecumenical Movement in Student World, 193 second quarter, p. 167.

in which our forefathers stood in 451 or 1054 or 1517. It is unrealistic to attempt to achieve unity on the basis of formulae or programmes that may have been adequate at that date, but are inadequate today.

There are others who seem to assume the permanent existence of the present denominational pattern and look for some type of federal union. They feel that it is impossible to envision one World Church or even one non-Roman World Church. Uniformity is not desirable. What is to be looked for is the growth of interdenominationalism. 'It is inconceivable that the major types of Protestant Christianity, namely Lutheranism, Calvinism, Anglicanism, and that noncredal, nonauthoritarian Protestantism which originated in the so-called sectarian movements of the Reformation and has blossomed in various forms particularly in English and American Christianity, will cease to be special independent entities in the life of Christendom. Within the ecumenical movement the Christian ways represented by them will continue to assert themselves—yet without the spirit of absolutism and without particularism'.⁸

The acceptance of this position would mean repudiating the real end and aim of the ecumenical movement itself. It is uncertain whether the kind of federation or association envisaged here will cure our 'homesickness of the *una sancta*'. While it is true that unity through uniformity is undesirable, it does not follow that unity in multiformity can be achieved only on the basis of separate existence of denominations. Further, while it is difficult and painful for each of us to think of the possible loss of the identity of our particular church tradition, it does not mean that it is impossible. The formation of the Church of South India more than ten years ago, in which Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist churches merged, and lost their separate identities, considered along with the fact that all these separate bodies acted with the concurrence or permission of the churches in the West through whose activity they came into being, proves that it is possible for denominations to lose their separate existence for the sake of a more wholesome form of church life. It was not unity through uniformity that was attempted in South India. Each group had a contribution to make to the totality of the new life, and the attempt was to *grow together* into a richer life wherein whatever was valuable in all the different traditions would be preserved and not abandoned. The ultimate success of the attempt has to be seen in history, but the last decade has shown that it is possible.

Unity in itself may not be a good thing. The concern for unity may even become an idol which we put in the place of God. We have to look forward and work towards wholeness, not merely unity. Wholeness and health will come from a renewed obedience and facing of the judgment of Christ on our various

⁸ W. Pauck, *The Heritage of the Reformation*, p. 288.

traditions and forms. It is in the common obedience that we will find wholeness and also the fulfilment of the values of our separate traditions.

We cannot hope to find light remedies for our deep and difficult problems. The catholic vision has to extend into all realms of the Church's life, and all things must be seen afresh in the light of that vision before we make any real headway in our search after wholeness. We cannot expect the ecumenical movement in its organized activities to heal all our ills. Karl Barth has warned us against putting our trust too easily in church movements. 'The union of churches is a thing which cannot be manufactured, but must be found and confessed, in subordination to that already accomplished oneness of the Church which is in Jesus Christ . . . The union of churches into the oneness of the Church would mean more than mutual tolerance, respect and co-operation ; above all it would mean, as the decisive test of unity, that we should join in making confession of our faith and thus should unitedly proclaim to the world and so fulfil that commandment of Jesus on which the Church is based . . . A union of the Churches in the sense of that task which is so seriously laid upon the Church would mean a union of the confessions into one unanimous confession. If we remain on the level where confessions are divided, we remain where the multiplicity of the churches is inevitable'.⁹

The unity to which we look forward is not merely of the forms of government or formulations of faith. We must seek for 'that unity of all human living, a balanced wholeness of work, craftsmanship, family life, community life, scholarship, games, art, bound together in a living and joyful sacrifice laid before God in worship, by union with the Word made flesh and in the power of the Holy Spirit. That is what "unity of the Church" really means; it is what men were made for'.¹⁰ The divisions of the Church today prevent true unity being achieved even in the sphere which may be called religious or spiritual in a narrow sense. Instead of assuming the sanctity and permanent nature of our present-day denominational system, we must look forward to the day, far or near, when they will merge, having been 'melted down and recast in the fires of the world's affliction', united through a death and rebirth.

We lose confidence when we look at the life of the churches as we know it and of the life of the members, that is, ours ; but when we remember that the Church is Christ's, and that he has again awakened the Church to a new obedience, having given her a new vision, we have hope. And the signs of the new beginnings in fresh ventures of obedience assume a new proportion when it is realized that what the Lord of the Church has worked in her is something which would have been inconceivable :

⁹ K. Barth, *op. cit.*, pp. 63, 67.

¹⁰ O. S. Tomkins, *Wholeness of the Church*, p. 71.

generation ago, our faith is fortified, along with the love for our brethren of other folds. So we go forward, trusting not in ourselves, but in Him who has called us afresh in the ecumenical search after wholeness.

INDIGENOUS THEOLOGY

'If you mention in academic circles that you would like to see the growth of an African Theology you will be met by the usual "It all depends what you mean by—" or "Let's be quite sure of our terms" as well as the occasional "There can no more be an African Theology than there can be an African Mathematics, these things transcend race and place". Let us try to define more closely. We surely mean more than just a theology produced by individuals who happen to be African. We do not mean anything like the theology of the German so-called Christians who mixed up theology with a myth of race. For an analogy we can look back to the early Church. Tertullian, St. Cyprian and St. Augustine, all of them men from this continent, produced a theology which was part of the heritage of the world-wide Church and yet it could be justly called "African" by the Church Historians. The same basic truths had filtered through the minds of the African Fathers as through the minds of the Greek Fathers, but the resultant presentation and slant given to the material was redolent of the Africa which produced the men. So today it is our hope that the fundamentals of theology will pass through the modern African mind and be presented in a manner acceptable to the universal Church but which would be nonetheless rightly called "African". For this the basic necessity is a study by Africans of the original founts of theology without the distorting medium of intermediary paraphrases and translations and their presuppositions.'

(Editorial : Ghana Bulletin of Theology, December 1958)

Davidic Descent and the Virgin Birth

M. BLANCHARD

Bishop Hollis's question: 'How can Jesus be both born of the Virgin Mary and Son of David?' reminds one of that puzzling question with which Jesus confounded the Rulers of the Jews on that last day of controversy, the last Tuesday before His crucifixion: 'How can David's Lord be David's Son?' Both questions deal essentially with the same issue, and the same answer will be found fitted to both questions. If it be accepted that Mary was a descendant of David, the same as Joseph, immediately the problem is solved. But, that answer is rejected in the article which appeared in the April-June, 1959, issue of *The Indian Journal of Theology*.

The evidence then for Mary's Davidic descent must be considered. No one questions the fact that Joseph's ancestry is traced back through David to Abraham in the first chapter of Matthew's Gospel. All agree likewise that Luke's list is radically different from Matthew's, and in inverse order. Matthew begins with Abraham and moves forward to Jesus; Luke begins with Jesus and traces the ancestry backward to Adam. On the face of it, their purposes seem to be different; their methods, different; and, we may suppose, the persons whose ancestries are traced different.

Basing their interpretation on the custom of Levirate marriage, attempts have been made along two lines to support the theory that both Matthew and Luke give the descent of Joseph. First, some have suggested that the two men referred to, Jacob in Matthew and Heli in Luke, were step-brothers. On the death of Heli, Jacob married his widow in accordance with the law of Levirate marriage, and Joseph was born to this second marriage. In this sense, both Heli and Jacob would be counted as fathers of Joseph, Heli the legal father and Jacob the real father. So Joseph's legal descent is traced through Heli in Luke's Gospel, and his real descent is traced through Jacob in Matthew's Gospel. The second explanation just exactly reverses this first one. It is argued by supporters of this theory that Matthew gives Joseph the legal descent as successor to the throne of David while Luke gives Joseph's real parentage. The law of Levirate is brought in

support here also ; but the position of the two brothers, Heli and Jacob, is reversed.

While there is possibility of support for both of these interpretations, the problems connected with them are great. And one of the chief problems is that raised by Bishop Hollis ; namely, that of reconciling the Davidic Descent of Jesus with His Virgin Birth. Another and more plausible solution suggests that Matthew gives the real descent of Joseph, and Luke the real descent of Mary. This solution in some cases avoids difficulties of interpretation raised by the first two theories, and in other cases provides a fair and balanced means of resolving certain difficulties raised by the first two theories. The list of scholars who have supported this interpretation is impressive ; it includes Eusebius, Luther, Bengel, Olshausen, Lightfoot, Wieseler, Robinson, Alexander, Godet, Weiss, Swete, Andrews, Robertson, and J. McNicol. Six arguments of more or less weight may be presented to support this interpretation :

(1) Matthew uses the term 'begat' all the way from the beginning right down to Joseph, and he closes with the statement, 'Jacob begat Joseph'. Matthew then is very emphatic that Jacob is the real father of Joseph ; but then he turns and just as clearly indicates that Joseph did not 'beget' Jesus, who was born of Mary. (Of course we are following here the major manuscripts and not the heretical Ebionitic manuscript which asserts that Joseph begat Jesus.) When Luke's account is considered it is found that he is just as careful to indicate that Jesus was only 'supposed' to be the son of Joseph. Then, without making it clear whose ancestry he intends to trace, he says that Joseph was 'to Heli'. We ask the question : What was Joseph to Heli ? The explanations mentioned above make him either son or step-son and call in the custom of Levirate marriage to reconcile the seeming discrepancy between Matthew and Luke. Since Matthew says clearly that Jacob begat Joseph, we suggest that the obvious meaning of Luke is that Joseph was son-in-law to Heli, that Heli was the real father of Mary.

(2) In Luke's account there is no article before Joseph, while it is used with every other name in the list. When this is taken account of, it is possible to translate thus : 'Being son (as was supposed of Joseph) of Heli.' Luke had already taken two chapters to give details concerning the manner of Christ's birth, and had stated as clearly as Matthew that His conception was a miraculous act of the Holy Spirit. When giving the genealogy, Luke is concerned with the physical ancestry of Jesus, and declares that He was a son of Heli ; 'son' being frequently used for 'grandson' would express the physical ancestry of Jesus through Heli. Since Matthew has made it clear that Jacob begat Joseph though Joseph did not beget Jesus, His physical ancestry cannot be traced through that line. How do we trace His physical ancestry then ? Luke provides the obvious answer : through Mary, the daughter of Heli.

(3) Although it is not elsewhere explicitly stated that Mary was of Davidic descent, it might be assumed to be thus from the language of the angel in his address to her in Luke's Gospel (1:32) and in her going for the enrolment with Joseph as recorded in Luke's Gospel (2:5). Ancestry through the tribe of Judah and ancestry through the tribe of Levi would thus be combined in Mary, and this would not be unusual, for the Levites took wives from all the other tribes.

(4) The Nativity Narrative in Matthew is recorded throughout from the standpoint of Joseph. In Matthew there is found the annunciation to Joseph of the birth to Jesus; Joseph is the one who is warned in a dream to take the young child and his mother and flee to Egypt; Joseph is the one who is told to bring the young child and his mother back to Palestine. In Luke there is found the annunciation to Mary of the birth of Jesus; here it is Mary's doings, her trip to see Elizabeth, her magnificat, her care for the child at his birth, her ponderings of heart that are recorded. In Luke, the words of Simeon are addressed to Mary the mother, and it is Mary who questions Jesus when they find Him in the temple at the age of twelve. The stories are complementary, and corroborative, not contradictory; but it is a very interesting fact that Matthew seems to be telling the story from the point of view of Joseph, and Luke from the point of view of Mary. This being true, much weight is added to the interpretation which sees Joseph's genealogy in Matthew, and Mary's genealogy in Luke.

(5) It is generally agreed that Matthew wrote for Jews while Luke wrote for Gentiles. This being the case it would seem proper for Matthew to show the legal claim Jesus had to the throne of David and to the Jew this could only be done if descent were traced through Joseph. Since Luke was writing for Gentiles, that is, for all non-Jews, it would be his purpose to trace the real ancestry of Jesus, and since the only real human ancestry He had was through Mary, Luke traced that ancestry through Mary, proving not only that Jesus was a son of David through Mary, but also a son of Adam through Mary. Luke is concerned to show that just as in Adam humanity had its first beginning, in Jesus humanity had a new beginning. Jesus was not only a son of Abraham, through Mary, He was also a son of Adam. The two lines given in Matthew and Luke show their first difference right after David. Matthew traces the royal line of David through Solomon and thus establishes the legal claim of Jesus to the throne of David. Luke traces Mary's ancestry back to Nathan, another son of David, but not one who reigned as king, and thus not only establishes that Jesus is a real son of David, but also goes on to prove His connection not only with Israel, but with all mankind as well.

(6) Another point that is given considerable emphasis by those who follow the literal interpretation of prophecy is found in Matthew's inclusion in his list of the accursed Jechoniah, whose name does not appear in Luke's list at all. Jechoniah had been

the ruling king of Judah at the time of the second Babylonian invasion in 598 B.C., and because of his wickedness Jeremiah had declared: 'None of his offspring shall succeed in sitting on the throne of David and ruling again in Judah' (22:30). Luke and Matthew both trace the ancestry of Jesus back through David. But, the lines separate before Jechoniah. He is found in Matthew's list, but not in Luke's list. If Jesus had been a real son of Joseph He would have been a real descendant of the accursed Jechoniah, and would have been disqualified from successful enthronement in David's place. Luke's list shows that Jesus was a son of David through Mary, in whose line Jechoniah is not found. So, from the legal point of view of the Jews, Jesus had a claim to Davidic descent and to David's throne through Joseph; and from the point of view of physical ancestry also He had a claim to Davidic descent and to David's throne through Mary, while escaping the curse pronounced on the physical ancestry of Jechoniah.

To be sure, this claim to Davidic descent and to David's throne through birth to the Virgin Mary is not mentioned in the New Testament. But, neither is it specially claimed that it was His descent through Joseph that established such a claim. In later life, on three occasions, He was referred to as the son of Joseph (Luke 4:22; John 1:45; 6:42); but on neither of these occasions was there an implication that because of being the son of Joseph He had a claim to David's throne. It may also be mentioned that on one occasion, in later life, He was referred to as the son of Mary (Matt. 13:55; Mark 6:3); and here also there was no connection with claim to Davidic descent or David's throne. In this connection it is important to note that Mark's account is a little more explicit than Matthew's. Mark uses the term, 'son of Mary', while Matthew turns it around the other way and refers to Mary as His mother. This is one of the little indications that may be found in Mark's Gospel by which inference may be drawn that Mark knew of the claim to the virgin birth and accepted it. If Mark, like Matthew, had simply referred to Mary as the mother of Jesus, it would have left the door open for assuming that He had a father also like every other human being. But, Mark uses a specific term, 'The son of Mary', and it is possible to see in this some indirect reference to the fact that His birth was different from ordinary human birth; otherwise, the more usual term would be, 'The son of Joseph'. Mark's silence on the virgin birth needs to be interpreted in the light of some such indirect references found in his Gospel. However, the main point we are getting at here is that Davidic descent and claim to David's throne is not referred to in the New Testament as being the result of birth either as the 'son of Joseph', or as the 'son of Mary'. He is claimed to be a son of David through His birth, 'born of the seed of David according to the flesh' (Rom. 1:3). The general assumption has been that this is traced through Joseph. But, if we are going to be strict and specific in giving the meaning of this

claim and at the same time suit our interpretation to all the facts in the case, it seems more reasonable to say that His legal claim to Davidic descent is established through the genealogy of Joseph as found in Matthew and His claim to actual physical ancestry from David is established through the genealogy of Mary as found in Luke. While it may be normal to think of the seed of David through the male line, yet it must be recognized that here we are dealing with a sublime mystery, and even in Genesis in that strange prophecy of the Messiah's birth He is referred to as the 'seed of woman' (3:15).

Our conclusion would be that it is not impossible to think of Luke as giving the real genealogy of Jesus through Mary. Such an interpretation comes closer to solving our difficulties than the interpretation based upon the custom of Levirate marriage. David's Lord became David's son through being born to a virgin who was descended from David. The mystery of the Davidic Descent of the Virgin Birth of Christ can be resolved if Luke's genealogy be taken as the genealogy of Mary.

'It has recently been pointed out by Dr. van Leeuwen of Holland that, following Dr. Hendrik Kraemer's book and the post-Tambaram developments in Christian thought concerning evangelism, attention has been focused almost exclusively on the relation of the Biblical view of the revelation of God in Christ and the human quest of non-Christian religions for experience of God-realization. Revelation as from God has been stressed at the expense of revelation to and for the world of men. The act of God's redemption in Christ Jesus is to seek and find this lost world of men. The theological approach has tended to overlook the underlying anthropological concern. Perhaps the time has come now for us to focus attention on the human aspect in God's redemptive act . . . on man as he really is, the creature for whose sake Jesus Christ died and rose from the dead. The burden of our message to the non-Christian world would then relate, in this generation certainly, to the Christian view of man and his destiny

(Dr. P. D. Devanandan in *The Gospel and the Hindu Intellectual*)

In the recent Serampore B.D. and L.Th. examinations, held at Serampore, affiliated colleges and other local centres, the total number of candidates was 419 : 303 internal and 116 external. That is, 46 for Preliminary, 170 for L.Th., 202 for B.D., and 1 for Religious Knowledge. The number of languages involved was 22, embracing 17 vernaculars, 4 Biblical and Classical languages and English.

The Virgin Birth

With primary reference to the treatment of the subject by Karl Barth in his 'Church Dogmatics', Vol. I, Part 2, Pp. 172-202. English edition, T. & T. Clark, 1956.

J. NELSON

In his second volume of Church Dogmatics (actually part two of volume one), now published, Karl Barth inevitably reverts (pp. 172-202) to the theme of the Virgin Birth when dealing with 'the Miracle of Christmas' as the climax to his study of the mystery of revelation in the Incarnation of the Word.

As always, he lifts the reader bodily into a world of vital theology, pregnant with prophetic insight and awe-inspiring understanding of the great issues of the Faith; but, as always, he also drives the reader to search in raging fury for pen and paper to stab out protest and denial, and insist on a more precise consideration of positions too roughly handled by this Socratic theological gadfly of our age.

In this volume, this is nowhere more compellingly so than in his discussion of the Virgin Birth.

Our starting point, however, is not one of protest, but a setting out of the clarifying assertion of Barth himself—

'The respect paid in the Church to this dogma cannot be sufficient reason in itself for us to adopt it as our own. In dogma as such we hear merely the voice of the Church and not revelation itself. If we make it our own and affirm it as the correct Church interpretation of revelation, this can be done only because we realize its necessity' (p. 174).

On that basis we can approach Barth's further relevant point on p. 176, in which he argues that the canonicity of the Birth Narratives in the Gospels is not material to the validity of the dogma of the Virgin Birth. The question of canonicity he dismisses as a literary issue, and the acceptance or rejection of the Virgin Birth he claims—

'... does not stand or fall with the answer to these (literary) questions. It certainly was not their age and source-value that brought the narratives of the Virgin Birth into the text of the Gospels and out of this text into the creed. But a certain inward, essential rightness

and importance in their connexion with the person of Jesus Christ first admitted them to a share in the Gospel witness.'

It is curious to consider how this 'inward, essential rightness and importance' could be known, and the knowledge of it enter into dogma and the Church if the literary decision should be against canonicity. It is surely essential to the dogma, though not constitutive of it as dogma—i.e. as having fundamental theological significance—that the literary evidence should vindicate the canonicity of the Birth Narratives, not just in general, but where they—so slenderly—insist on the *virginity* of Mary in the bearing of Christ. The slenderness Barth fully admits—he can do no other—and since the literary question is still an open one, we are quite unable to adduce the doctrine as essential dogma from such an insubstantial and unsubstantiated literary source.

LITERARY EVIDENCE

The New Testament has, in fact, very little to say about Mary being a virgin, whether or no that little is canonical. This is too well known and too easily ascertained from a reading of a few verses of the first Gospel. Indeed it may well be that there was nothing more or different to it than a (quite legitimate) attempt to link up the Birth of Jesus with Isaiah's prophetic deliverance—

'Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel' (Isaiah 7:14).

There is no attempt in St. Matthew 1 to make any specific point of her virgin state, nor to deduce any religious or spiritual significance from it. The stress in Isaiah and in the Gospel is on the total content of the prophetic vision—Immanuel, God is with us—and for the Hebrew prophet and for the Evangelist alike, God with us, God present with us, means inevitably God present for us, God present to redeem in free and gracious love. God is known and encountered only in grace, in judgment and mercy. In such a context, 'virgin' is incidental, indeed accidental, even if the Hebrew does mean more than a young woman. The obvious exegesis of the Isaiah passage is not affected by it. Her condition is not constitutive of the character of the divine Deliverer and his Kingdom. The Hebrew prophets, while dealing invariably with the concrete events of human life and history, are never fundamentally concerned with what we might call the accidents of geography and history, but, as in this context, with the spiritual and revelational, i.e. redeeming significance of God's intervention through his prophets, or, supremely, through his Messiah. It was the tragedy of Judaism in the time of Christ that it had lost the spiritual, i.e. redemptive, significance of the Messianic hope, and we should put ourselves in the camp of the legalistic religious leaders of Christ's time if we sought in Isaiah or, in due turn, in the Birth Narratives of the Gospels external

factors (as virginity in the mother of our Lord) as something decisive or critically significant for the awful, inward, essential spiritual reality of the coming of the Son of God in the form of man.

Our line of argument is not, of course, that the Virgin Birth is to be rejected out of hand, but simply that it does not claim to be, and cannot be, dogma. It is not theologically necessary, however true it may be as history—though, indeed, even as history, it would still seem to be an open question.

Also, it should be noted, in the case of every other New Testament assertion of any importance, historical or theological, concerning Jesus Christ, there is no such uncertain documentary evidence, and no such lack of integration into the very essence of the narrative or teaching involved. We may read all that is told us of the Birth of Jesus Christ without at any point feeling that what little mention there is of Mary's virgin state is of final significance historically or theologically. We might indeed say with all due reverence that it would be most unlike God to make such thin and uncertain evidence fundamental to correctly understood faith—i.e. dogma.

THEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

And so setting aside the literary, external problem we turn to the fundamental question—Wherein does the 'inward essential rightness and importance' of the Virgin Birth lie? On Barth's general showing, it must be within the realm of revelation, regardless of what the human reason outside revelation and the realm of grace might consider possible, and as an inherent element in the revealed truth of God incarnate, God become man in Jesus Christ, as a clarification of one element in the reality of *Vere Deus et vere homo*. But does it? If so, in what way?

In the following paragraphs the attempt will be made to show that, setting aside with Barth the literary question of canonicity, the theological necessity for the Virgin Birth cannot be established on adequate grounds: rather, indeed, that if it is considered as having THEOLOGICAL significance and relevance, it is intractable, misleading, and dangerous, leading in the end to an inadequate and therefore heretical Christology by softening and belittling the *Vere homo* to the extent of dismissing the seriousness of that quite essential completing of the *Vere Deus*.

THE VIRGIN BIRTH AS SIGN, ANALOGY, AND PARALLEL

(a) According to Barth, one element in the 'inward, essential rightness and importance' of the Virgin Birth lies in its significance as a sign, bearing witness to, attesting the reality of the Incarnation. But in what way does it do so?

Bread and wine are recognizably food and drink, and as we take them in the Sacrament show forth as most vivid and

indubitable signs of our feeding upon Christ. The breaking of the bread and the pouring out of the wine show forth the bruising and breaking of the flesh of Christ, and the shedding of his life blood—for the blood is the life. We are helped to realize his self-sacrifice in self-giving to death itself.

So the water used in Baptism inescapably signifies cleansing—an outward material sign conveying a clear picture, and so pointing to the appropriate and inevitable inward counterpart. But Virgin Birth does not come in this way as a 'natural' sign. What it would 'naturally' show forth, as we shall presently see, would be heresy, if it were used in this way as a 'sign', or as indicating in any essential way the character of the Incarnation.

(b) The inappropriateness of VIRGIN Birth is further seen in Barth's elaboration of his conception of it as a sign, in terms of analogy.

He says—

'A sign must, of course, signify. To do so it must have in itself something of the kind of thing it signifies; it must be in analogy with it noetically, and ontically. In this respect the miracle of Christmas is in analogy with what it signifies, the mystery of Christmas' (p. 182).

But this being in analogy is what precisely the Virgin Birth is not. Barth says of VIRGIN Birth what must be said equally of a birth through one OR TWO human parents. The sign is birth of a HUMAN mother (with or without a human father), so that Immanuel comes fully human, utterly one with us in our nature—and as utterly one with God in his Nature. To speak of VIRGIN Birth at this point is a distraction, a pointing away from the terrible fulness of the humanity of Immanuel, God with us, to a hint that something at least was less human, or differently human so that the impact of the blow that God became man may be cushioned. Indeed, as here, Barth is all the way through putting forward considerations which are precisely arguments against the VIRGIN character of the Birth, and in favour of no abnormality here, so that the awful fulness of the humanity may be truly seen without the distraction and amelioration of such a condition.

(c) His use of the parallel of the Resurrection (p. 182) takes Barth's argument no further forward. The parallel is surely not between Resurrection and VIRGIN Birth at all. It is between fully human birth on the one hand, and fully human death on the other—death all too real in the agony of Calvary—then the Resurrection comes as God's glorious sign, most obvious sign, that Jesus Christ simply is not in the tomb, and the significance of that is completed in the Resurrection appearances. Christ has triumphed over death and hell. There is the whole triumph of Christ risen in his glory and about to ascend to the Father, about to create and dwell within his Church in the Power and Presence of the Holy Spirit. Sin and death are trampled underfoot, and God's victory in the totality of the Incarnation is now completed

and manifested and made to enter into the lives of the disciples. From start to finish, there is the fulness of Incarnation, of Vere Deus become also without qualification or amelioration vere homo, from Birth to Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, and no peculiarity or less fully human factor (such as a virgin mother) at Birth or at any other point can strengthen the reality of the Divinity, but if used at all can only suggest an abnormality in, and therefore a belittling of the humanity.

PRESUPPOSITIONS EXAMINED

This clears the way for a noting of some general considerations which may be conveniently listed under four heads.

(1) Sex is essentially and uniquely evil.

Given the fact that God the Son was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of Mary, it is very helpful to Greek—and thence to Roman Catholic—preconceptions and presuppositions that Mary should be also virgin. This arises from the insufficiently recognized obsession of the Greek and, in turn, the Roman Catholic mind with the deeply rooted assumption that sex and the sex act are essentially and peculiarly evil, and that therefore an impossible smirch falls on the Son of God if He was born of authentic human intercourse. Here, to our relief, we find that Barth is with us—or we with Barth! He says—

‘Here we cannot consider the quite un-biblical view that sexual life as such is to be regarded as an evil to be removed, so that the active sign is to be sought in the fact that this removal is here presumed to have taken place’ (p. 190).

and later, on the same page—

‘Thus the exclusion of this sinful sexual life does not mean the exclusion of sin in the sense of PECCATUM ORIGINALE, and so this exclusion is still as unsuitable as ever to be the sign of the penetration and new beginning in the existence of Jesus Christ, to be the sign of His sinlessness.’

This is well said, for Christian dogma says that TOTAL human nature is fallen, and if, as Barth claims (p. 194), the New Testament does not speak of the redemption of the sex act, it is not because the sex act is peculiarly evil, but because it is part of the totality of human sinfulness, and not at all in some unique way especially so. It may be capable of bearing a greater burden of sin only in the strict sense that the greater the divine gift, and the more fully human anything is, the more capable it is of deeper perversion—just as religion, man’s professed relationship to God, which *ipso facto* should be the highest and best, is capable of a greater perversion, capable of being set over against the sovereign grace of God as something of man’s own, and of man’s own

righteousness, beyond anything else in the field of human rebellion. It is a truism that Jesus Christ was never moved to anger except by the self-righteousness of the officially religious ; and, of course, the deepest relationships of love may be set as a barrier against God, e.g. in the family. Hence Christ's sobering demand to 'hate' father, mother, and all whom by his Grace we have learned to love. The love of husband and wife may come into the same category. That deepest of all loves with all its physical implications is as fully in need of redemption as all else within us ; but to admit—indeed insist on—that, is very different from accepting the totally pagan disgust at it all, born of a profound and completely non-Christian perversion of male-female relations, and of a complete misunderstanding of the nature and function of woman. Those of us who have lived in Muslim lands can well appreciate the battle the early Church had to fight to rise to a Christian conception of woman and her relationship to man. Augustine's 'Confessions' on the individual scale, and monasticism and the celibacy of the clergy on a community scale are glaring examples of the unsuccessful attempt down the long centuries to deal with the issue. There are those who would even claim that St. Paul wobbled on it.

Surely the Christian view is that in every human birth there is the wonder of God's creative act, and if this comes in the setting of real human love and self-giving between husband and wife, then we can only stand in awe before a totality of loving and mysterious human experience under the shadow of God's creative Hand. So the child born of a human father and a human mother is not the unfortunate and somewhat disgraceful by-product of human sinfulness, but comes out of the wondrous mystery of God's sovereign creative act through his own pre-arranged method of crowning the union of a man and a woman in love and self-giving, with a child of their own.

The Church will have much to answer for on the Day of Judgment for her inadequate teaching on this matter, and on the whole range of possibilities and problems that arise from the relations at all levels which are conceivable between men and women. She has taken refuge in asceticism or puritanism or silence, when she should have been teaching positively and creatively about supreme and central things of God's ordaining. She has forgotten that—

'Abusus non tollit usum,'

that perversion does not damn what is perverted. She has allowed a vague confusion regarding the doctrine of original sin to cast its shadow over the whole realm of sex relations and even marriage itself, and has faltered woefully in her understanding of the greatest of all divinely given human relationships—that of husband, wife, child.

(2) Non-virgin Birth means a timing and a conditioning of the Incarnation by human will.

One further reason why the thought of Mary's virginity is a comforting one for many is the instinctive feeling (not a theologically inescapable conviction) that if Jesus Christ was born of Mary AND Joseph, then at the very least the timing and conditioning of the Incarnation were controlled by their human wills in so far as they willed to come together in marriage, and in the begetting of the Child. This would seem to limit God's freedom, and imply that the will and desire of these two human beings controlled in some measure the dating and conditioning of the Incarnation.

At this point we must again join issue with Barth. He argues (p. 191) that while the 'sinful life of sex' is excluded here in the Birth of Christ, what is significant is not that, but that by the exclusion of Joseph God acted freely in becoming man, the one human being involved—Mary—being purely passive, so that wilful, arrogant human initiative is excluded; so God acts sovereignly, and Christ is born sinlessly. He writes—

'The mystery of revelation and reconciliation consists in the fact that in His freedom, mercy and omnipotence, God became man, and as such acts upon man. By this action of God sin is excluded and nullified. And to this particular action of God the NATUS EX VIRGINE points. It is the sign that the sinful life of sex is excluded as the origin of the human existence of Jesus Christ. In that God in His revelation and reconciliation is the Lord and makes room for Himself among us, man and his sin are limited and judged. God is also Lord over His sinful creature. God is also free over its original sin, the sin that is altogether bound up with its existence and antecedent to every evil thought, word, and deed. And God—but God only—is free to restore this freedom to His creature. This freedom will always be the freedom of His own action upon His creature, and so the negation of a freedom of this creature's own. Since it lives by His grace, it is judged in its own will and accomplishment. If the NATUS EX VIRGINE with its exclusion of the sinful life of sex points to this gracious judgment of God, it really signifies the exclusion of sin in the sense of PECCATUM ORIGINALE. That it does actually point to this gracious judgment of God, we realize when we consider that in the birth without previous sexual union of man and woman (of which Scripture speaks), man is involved in the form of Mary, but involved only in the form of the VIRGO MARIA, i.e. only in the form of non-willing, non-achieving, non-creative, non-sovereign man, only in the form of man who can merely receive,

merely be ready, merely let something be done to and with himself' (p. 191).

This is illuminating and useful in clarifying the meaning of original sin; but while we inevitably accept that original sin is excluded in the Birth of Christ, in what conceivable way can this be imagined as arising from or in the device of excluding a human father? Is original sin present only in the father, or by the father? Or are we back again at the conception that sex is basically and uniquely evil? Is the father inevitably active and the mother 'non-willing, non-achieving, non-creative, non-sovereign' in every human birth? These negatives may validly be applied to Mary whether or no Joseph was involved in the begetting of Christ. They may be a fitting commentary on her—

'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word' (St. Luke 1:38).

but that is quite unrelated to her virgin or non-virgin state. It is surely of Grace, regardless of her state.

Barth later asserts what is in effect a correction of his misleading argument here. He writes—

'We certainly have to say that the wife has also a share in this determination of man. For she, too, is man' (p. 193).

This is quite basic and fundamental, and if maintained throughout by Barth—and by all theologians down the ages—would have avoided untold confusion. Husband and wife, man and woman equally in the theological sense are MAN. That drives us back on a deeper understanding of God's freedom and sovereignty in every human birth, regardless of the human wills and act involved. God's sovereign freedom is present in every human birth, and is absolute. Are we to imagine that any human child can be born under any conceivable circumstances without the over-ruling and creative might of God being involved from start to finish? God has not abdicated the throne of Creation. A clear grasp of the doctrines of creation and predestination is nowhere more necessary than here. No Christian dare look upon himself as an accidental arrival in God's universe, whatever the conditions of his birth. God willed that this very person should be born, and no sin, however blatant and defiant in the 'creation' of a human life, e.g. outside marriage, can lord it over the divine freedom and 'create' where God alone creates, creates despite the sin, and where the child born of his free and sovereign Will enters upon the field of his destiny under God's good Hand.

So we may take it in our stride that two human wills may have been involved, and that their human love may have been crowned with the Birth of a Child who, in the inscrutable Purpose of God, and in the fulfilment of his sovereign and gracious Will, was God the Son incarnate.

(3) Man comprises soul and body.

Inherent in the popular craving to cling to the story of the Virgin Birth is the desire to tidy things up along the line of the false Greek division of the human person into soul and body. When it is said that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, there is not only in the shocked mind of the Muslim (for whom this is the cardinal Christian blasphemy), but also in the naive unreflecting mind of many ordinary Christians, the idea that the Holy Spirit in some sense begat Jesus Christ and Mary bore Him, meaning that the Holy Spirit animated, gave a divine Spirit (the Son) to the human body of the child Jesus at his Birth. This, of course, is not only impossible Christology. It is flat heresy. It does not at all maintain the two natures, the full divinity, Vere Deus, and the full humanity, vere homo, united in a divine mystery. It is the popular 'psychological' solution to the problem of the 'joining' of the two natures held so unjustifiably, and so frequently without correction, by many pietist sects and by the man in the pew—to take it no higher! Negatively, it is born of the fear that if a human father had been involved, there would have been such a human completeness in Christ that there would have been no room for the 'divine element' in one who is already fully and completely man, as are other men generated of a human father and mother. If we may for once lapse into theological jargon, it is the Alexandrian fear of Antiochene Christology. To think of Joseph as the human father is a scandal to this assumption, for it makes Christ fully human, and leaves as a baffling mystery without clue or hint of a 'rational solution' the Vere Deus. Indeed it would completely invalidate the dogma of the divinity of Christ, on this view. A human father and a human mother could produce only a fully human son, and leave absolutely no room for the Vere Deus—as though the Incarnation, the reality of the divinity, could be tied to the human factors in birth, and not depend entirely upon the sovereign free Will of God, who may choose or not choose normality on the human side as He pleases, and bring to that the divine Mystery of Incarnation in the fulness of his truly human and truly divine Word made flesh.

The inescapable dogma of the Incarnation is not connected with the virgin or non-virgin state of Mary. The dogma is that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of a specific woman, Mary, her importance being not that she was or was not virgin, but that she was fully human, truly man—and He was Vere Deus and vere homo.

Recent notorious claims in the popular press regarding reputed virgin births would rob the dogma of its peculiar value if it were simply a dogma of Mary's virginity; but of course the true dogma of the Incarnation is quite untouched by such a trifle. What is at stake is that born of a real woman, a real human being, or equally of real human beings, He who was by nature divine

came from the depths of the Godhead to share our manhood in the fulness of his humanity, and redeem us in his great cosmic act.

The mystery of the Incarnation, the miracle of Christmas, is that of a truly human mother—virgin or not—God came to us. Regardless of the two alternatives on the human side, from Mary alone, or from Mary and Joseph, this mystery, this miracle of Incarnation stands, and depends utterly and completely on the divine initiative, the sovereign free act of God, choosing his method as He pleases, and whether a human father was involved or not is not a matter of constitutive necessity but of free divine choice.

Belief in the Virgin Birth can therefore be held only on the ground that the New Testament accurately records that God has chosen so to act—freely. The caveat must be entered immediately that this does not mean that God added the divine element to Mary's contribution of the human element, but that God the Son became incarnate not in a human body, but in the fulness of a human being, the Son of Mary. His humanity was as totally human as every other man's, since He was man, just as his divinity was as totally divine as God's, since He was God.

Barth himself, we may interpolate, does not, of course, fall into the elementary error—only too widespread—discussed above. He safeguards (p. 197) that God the Spirit is the One who conceives not the 'divine Person' added to the human body (Mary's contribution), but who came in the divine Son through Mary into the fully human nature of Christ.

For those of us who are concerned about Islam, this is an issue of unique seriousness.

In the Qur'ān, Sura 72, the Djinn are reputed to have listened to Muhammad and said,

'Verily, we have heard a marvellous discourse ;
It guideth to the truth ; wherefore we believed in it,
and we will not henceforth join any being with our
Lord ;
And He,—may the majesty of our Lord be exalted!—
hath taken no spouse neither hath He any offspring.
But the foolish among us hath spoken of God that which
is unjust.'

And again in Sura 6 we hear—

'Sole maker of the Heavens and of the Earth ! how, when
He hath no consort, should He have a son ?'

And again in Sura 112—

'Say : He is God alone ;
God the eternal !
He begetteth not, and He is not begotten ;
And there is none like unto Him.'

In sundry other places the same theme is reiterated with unceasing force.

Now Barth says (p. 200)—

‘The assertion *conceptus de Spiritu sancto* must now be protected from an imminent misunderstanding. It does not state that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Holy Spirit according to His human existence. On the contrary, it states as emphatically as possible—and this is the miracle it asserts—that Jesus Christ had no father according to His human existence. Because in this miracle the Holy Spirit takes the place of the male, this by no means implies that He does what the male does. Because Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, it does not, therefore, mean—or can mean only in an improper sense—that He is begotten by the Holy Spirit. The idea is completely excluded that anything like a marriage took place between the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary.’

This is precisely what must be said—with the glaring exception of the impossible and inconceivable assertion that ‘. . . In this miracle the Holy Spirit takes the place of the male.’ This is precisely what He does not do. The admission of such a clause to the argument shows the confusion that can be introduced even into the thinking of a great theologian when he starts from the false premise that the virginity rather than the humanity of Mary (regardless of the issue of virginity) is the significant element in the background to the *vere homo* of the Redeemer. It was this very confusion that vitiated the thought of the Eastern Church, and led Muhammad to his shocked denial of the divinity of Christ. It has been traditional to argue that he misunderstood the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, but the humbling and damning truth is that he seems to have understood only too well the heretical tenets of the Churches or sects of his time in the Eastern empire and neighbouring regions.

Are we to go back to the same tenets, or leave the door open to them by a like confusion between virginity and humanity? Are we to say that ‘In this miracle the Holy Spirit takes the place of the male’? Whether or no Joseph is excluded, Mary was fully human, and the Birth was fully human, and the Holy Spirit acted in free divine sovereignty in a way which is in no conceivable sense a replacement of that of the male. On the contrary, it is entirely ‘*sui generis*’, uniquely and completely ‘*sui generis*’, God sending his Son freely and graciously in the inexplicable mystery of the Incarnation, to be born fully divine and fully human of Mary.

It is hardly surprising in view of this age-old persistent confusion regarding the significance of virginity and humanity in the Church that the universal Muslim conviction is that the Trinity

is for the Christian the three 'persons' (=individuals)—God, Mary, and Jesus.

No-one should be permitted to set up as a dogmatic theologian, and in particular should not be allowed to utter or write a word on the Trinity and the Incarnation until he has lived for an appreciable period in a Muslim country.

(4) What is abnormal is more conceivable.

In denying a normal human begetting of the Babe of Bethlehem so far as human parentage is concerned, there is a barely realized but very deep-seated and potent feeling in the minds of many that in an ABNORMAL (i.e. virgin) birth, it is a little more understandable that an abnormal or supra-normal child could be born, and that from this miraculous event (miraculous in being of a mother only), it requires a shorter jump to envisage the Holy Spirit of God as being active to bring about the conception of the eternal Son in the context of human flesh and blood.

Against such an assumption, no protest can be too strong. The basis of the protest can be found in Barth's own words (p. 172—and indeed, the whole context on pp. 172-173)—

'God's revelation in its objective reality is the incarnation of His Word, in that He, the one true eternal God, is at the same time true Man like us.'

This mystery, he says, is a *Novum* which—

'... becomes the object of our knowledge by its own power and not by ours ... we can understand the possibility of it solely from the side of its object, i.e. we can regard it not as ours, but as one coming to us, imparted to us, gifted to us. In this bit of knowing we are not the masters but the mastered.'

(Then on p. 173)—

'But even in the very act of knowing this reality and of listening to the Christmas message, we have to describe the meeting of God and world, of God and man in the person of Jesus Christ—and not only their meeting but their becoming one—as inconceivable ... If in knowledge of the incarnation of the word, in knowledge of the person of Jesus Christ we are speaking of something really other, if the object of Christology, "very God and very Man", is objectively real for us, then all that we can arrive at by our experience and our thought is the realization that they are delimited, determined, and dominated here by something wholly outside or above us. Knowledge in this case means acknowledgment. And the utterance or expression of this knowledge is termed confession. Only in acknowledgment or confession can we say that Jesus Christ is very God and very Man ... In the very act of acknowledgment and

confession we must always acknowledge and confess together both the distance of the world from God and the distance of God from the world, both the majesty of God and the misery of man. It is the antithesis between these that turns their unity in Christ into a mystery. Thus we must ever acknowledge and confess the inconceivability of this unity.'

All this is quite fundamental.

So that, emphatically, Incarnation is not made easier to envisage by the abnormality of the human begetting. To think it easier is to depend on error and self-deception.

So the mystery of Christmas is undoubtedly indicated by reference to the miracle of Christmas which is—

'... the conception of Jesus Christ by the Holy Ghost or His birth of the Virgin Mary.'

Born of God and born of woman, Vere Deus, vere homo; because born of God and of human parentage; but this in no way indicates the necessity of abnormality or differentness in the human parentage by the device of excluding a human father and somehow imagining on no conceivable grounds that this will make God in man a more acceptable dogma.

It is a short step from such conceptions to a setting of Mary apart from other human beings, an exalting of her in a cult which in a supposed safeguarding of the divinity of the incarnate Lord must push back the cradle of holiness through immaculate conception to the previous generation—which logically must lead to the positing of immaculate conception in the generation before that, as indeed is the trend in one branch of the contemporary Church, and then equally logically back through generation after generation with no possibility of stopping short of Adam and Eve—which is surely the reductio ad absurdum of all views that make Virgin Birth dogma.

Although this approach cannot readily be given a patristic or classical heretical label, it is none the less a serious aberration, to say the very least of it, leading to a thinning of the inconceivability of Incarnation by softening the stark fulness of the humanity.

The answer to the problem of the inconceivability of Incarnation is certainly not to blur the reality of the fulness of the humanity by imagining that abnormality on the human side makes God incarnate more conceivable.

CONCLUSION

For these reasons Virgin Birth would best be avoided as a sign, or as indicating in any other fundamental way the essential character of the Incarnation.

So that theologically the question of the Virgin Birth remains

open, and according to our acceptance of the New Testament critical evidence as to the primitive authenticity and validity of the statements in the few relevant New Testament verses, or their lack of these, we decide that God did or did not of his own free sovereign Will CHOOSE to send Christ born of a virgin or of one no longer virgin, but in either case He was born fully human of human parentage, whether one parent was involved or two, and fully divine, since He was God coming amongst us, *conceptus de Spiritu sancto*—He was indeed *vere homo* and *Vere Deus*—and all was done as the free, almighty Act of God's most glorious and sovereign Grace.

Bible Translation

The Bible Society is publishing a fresh translation of the Greek New Testament into English, especially for the use of those who are translating the Greek into vernaculars. It is to be published book by book. St. Mark is already appearing : St. Matthew and St. John are soon to follow. It is the work both of Greek New Testament scholars (led by Prof. G. D. Kilpatrick) and of a group of people with knowledge of different vernaculars. 'The purpose is to convey in accurate and unambiguous language the meaning of the original for nationals engaged in the translation of the New Testament in different parts of the world. It is realized that very often such translators have not a firsthand acquaintance with New Testament Greek. Existing translations into English were done having in view those who have an English cultural background, and while they may serve admirably for the modern English reader, they contain idioms and expressions which do not invariably carry across to those who do not share that background'.

'The Bible Translator'

Book Reviews

Irreligious Reflections on The Christian Church : by Werner Pelz. S.C.M.
(Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, 5 Russell Street, Calcutta 16.) Pp. 128.
Rs.6/80.

It is the author's thesis that 'our fundamental task, the *raison d'être* of the Church, is to tell in our own human fallible language the story of the great acts of God ; to catch and reflect in our own human fallible words the eternal Word of God : we are here to preach'. The Church owes its creation, preservation and redemption solely to the grace of God and is to carry out its commission in the power of that same grace.

With this thesis in mind the author brings to light and judges the conventional Christianity practised by the contemporary Church, with all its shabbiness, ambiguities, hypocrisies and equivocations. The author aims to disturb and arouse his readers : 'tearing open the abyss we had papered over with a life insurance, a few pages of philosophy and biblical quotations'. He has indeed achieved his aim and his book is full of the most uncomfortable observations. With remarkable insight he brings out clearly how the Church down the ages has come to terms with the world : how all its hope is worldly : its practice worldly : its end death. He observes : 'We have all opted for the country of death that strange system of mutual security and comprehensive network of material, moral and spiritual insurance which makes provision for everything including our tombstone'.

His prophetic judgements are of greater value, as, being a parish priest, he criticizes from within the Church. He offers a constructive vision of the Church, the congregation and individual men and of the work they could accomplish in the world if they lived in the light and the knowledge and the power of the grace of God. He brings a new light and a new value to the great concepts of grace, freedom and election within the biblical system and within the Church. It should perhaps be said that while the theme of grace does run through the book, it holds the chapters together rather weakly : and although some of the chapters follow each other closely, they are on the whole rather disjointed and the book tends to be a collection of 'stray thoughts' on a diversity of profound subjects. But the author has a very vigorous style of writing and there is an intensity and urgency on every page which cannot fail to grip the reader. It is an immensely profitable book to read : for the reader cannot fail to recognize his own weaknesses and those of his Church and society in every line. Every page of the book thunders with the prophetic denunciation of a Jeremiah or an Amos, and forms excellent reading for the seasons of Advent or Lent.

Calcutta

SUBIR K. BISWAS

Mysticism, Sacred and Profane : by R. C. Zaehner. An Inquiry into some Varieties of Praeternatural Experience. Oxford University Press : Clarendon Press. Pp. xviii + 256. 42s.

We are so often told that all mystics give us the same message, and are all equally able to lead us to God, that even many Christians accept it as a true statement, and it has become almost a part of our mental furniture. The Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics in the University of Oxford brings detailed evidence in this book to show that this is not so, and that the mystics differ widely from each other in their experiences, and

also that in many cases the experiences are different from what the mystics themselves imagine them to be.

He takes as his starting point Mr. Aldous Huxley's account in *The Doors of Perception* of his experience under the influence of mescaline, and his identification of it with the Beatific Vision, *Sac-cid-ānanda*, and the Dharma-Body of the Buddha, and goes on to show that there are, not only one, but three main types of mysticism. The first, which the author styles nature mysticism, or 'pan-en-hen-ism'; 'all-in-one-ism', is that which is often called (erroneously, because it has nothing directly to do with God) pantheism, its essence being the feeling of identification with all nature, in which 'all creaturely existence is experienced as one and one as all'; then there is the isolation of the 'self', of which monistic Hindu mysticism is typical; and thirdly, there is the normal Christian type of mystical experience in which the soul feels itself to be united to God by love, a type of mysticism which is shared in a measure by other theistic mystics, including the Sūfis and some Hindus. Beyond all these lies the Beatific Vision as Christians understand it.

Clearly in a short review it is not possible to follow the author through all the fascinating ramifications of the matter: men like Rimbaud and Proust, great Hindu and Muslim teachers of mysticism, Christian mystics (with Ruysbroeck largely quoted), Jung, a certified manic-depressive, the author's own experience under the influence of mescaline; all are laid under contribution. Here I will just pick out one or two of the matters which particularly struck me. First, there are the accounts of 'pan-en-henic' mysticism, which shed a revealing light on what has been to me a puzzling feature of Hinduism, the allegation that God is beyond good and evil, and the deification, as it seems, of the dark side of human nature in Kālī. Then there is the evidence which Professor Zaehner brings forward for Vedantic influence on Sūfism which shows the unreliability of generalizations about the spontaneous unanimity of the mystics. Thirdly, for us in Bengal, there is the author's singularly appreciative treatment of Rāmkrishna. But these are only a tithe of the good things which are stored within the covers of this book.

On the other side of the picture, one wonders whether Jung is not sometimes given too much weight. For instance, the incidental discussion on p. 91, of the origin of the title 'Sun of Righteousness' as applied to Christ, takes no account of Malachi 4:2, and suggests the sort of topsyturvydom that G. K. Chesterton used to castigate so incisively*. But on the whole, the contributions which the author brings from Jung are suggestive and illuminating, provided that it is remembered that psychology has its blind spots, and in particular, that it has nothing to say about the origin, in the creative act of God, of the 'collective unconscious', and of the symbolism that it analyses.

No one need be frightened at the wide range of the author's reading; passages in foreign languages (with one or two insignificant exceptions) are invariably translated. And there is a copious index (over 20 pages) which makes the book of great value for reference purposes.

Those who seek to understand other religions than their own will be grateful for this study, and if it should lead to new thinking on the problem of presenting the religion of Christ to Hindus, the author's service to the Church in India will be great indeed. Particularly valuable is his repeated insistence that the natural or 'pan-en-henic' mystical experience is not the end, but should be a beginning of the mystical path, leading up to union with God by faith and charity, and his brief exposition of *Sac-cid-ānanda* in relation to the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, though the warnings given by Canon May in his article on the latter subject in Vol. VII, No. III, of this *Journal* must be borne in mind. And in relation to the former point, the formidable difficulty which faces us is shown in the following quotation

*It is not altogether clear whether the author in this passage is reproducing Jung, or setting forth his own development of Jungian doctrine.

which the author has taken from Ruysbroeck, who is speaking of the Brethren of the Free Spirit (for which 'Brethren of the Holy Spirit' on p. 109 would seem to be a slip), who were, as it seemed to them, occupied in the contemplation of God, and believed themselves to be the holiest men alive, although they regarded themselves as freed from the discipline of the Church and the pursuit of virtue: 'I hope that few such men will be found, but such as are, they are the evillest and most harmful men that live, and it is hard for them to be converted'. They believed that they already had all that God could bestow, and had no interest in seeking further. As Professor T. W. Manson points out in another connexion, no secret is so well kept as that which no one is willing to discover.

Calcutta

WALTER B. MADDAN

The First Epistle of Peter: by F. W. Beare. (Second Edition). Basil Blackwell, Oxford. 25s.

The second edition of this commentary differs from the first only in about half-a-dozen notes added here and there in the text and a supplement dealing with writings consulted or published after the 1947 edition. The first edition was published about the same time as Selwyn's larger book (1946), and since these are the two most recent large-scale works in English, they invite comparison. Indeed perhaps this book is best read as a companion and corrective to Selwyn.

For example, in the matter of authorship, Selwyn stood by the traditional position while allowing a large hand in the composition to Silvanus. Beare is quite sure that St. Peter had no hand in the epistle at all. In the supplement, in which Selwyn's view is considered, he exposes all the difficulties in the Silvanus hypothesis. This was always the weakest point in Selwyn's argument and it must, I think, be abandoned. Chiefly Beare abandons the traditional authorship because he believes the epistle must be dated after the lifetime of the Apostle, and he thinks the circumstances of the letter correspond exactly with those revealed by the correspondence between Pliny and Trajan, affirming, quite rightly, that there is no evidence of an official persecution in Asia Minor earlier than this. He does not think the language of I Peter can properly be applied to local outbreaks of unofficial violence or trouble-making. Here he is on strong ground and defenders of an early date have always been hard put to it to explain such phrases as suffering 'for the name of Christ', and the incidence of unofficial violence extending through five provinces. But I am not sure that the ground is quite so strong as Beare thinks, and it may be useful to turn aside here to show how it is possible to interpret evidence in accordance with preconceived ideas rather than to admit that the evidence is not absolutely conclusive. Beare believes, and no doubt rightly, that i 3-iv 11 is a baptismal discourse perhaps related in some way to the Paschal Liturgy, while the remainder of the work is the letter proper. He insists that the sermon must be earlier than the letter, because the letter shows signs of an actual persecution in progress, while in the sermon the tone is much calmer. This conclusion does not seem to me very well assured. It leads Beare into somewhat exaggerated translations (surely 'the fiery ordeal that is raging among you' is a rather purple rendering of *τη ἐν ὑμῖν πυρώσει γινομένη*), and it leads him to underestimate the significance of the fact that in the baptismal sermon, about one-third of the verses speak about the sufferings of Christ and our duty of imitating them. These verses get a less imaginative exegesis than they deserve, and Beare further fails to note that chapter five has none of the urgency that he discerns in iv 12-19. It seems to me that we ought to think of the discourse being preached to candidates at a time when it was definitely dangerous to become a Christian, and then the letter would be a short message addressed to the churches themselves suitable for the occasion. The point I wish to make here is that it is not too easy to discern from the epistle at which points the temperature of the persecution rises or falls; and that means that it is not quite certain whether

we can say conclusively that iv 12-19 must refer to official violence or whether we ought to leave some place in our minds for the possibility that serious unpopularity and winked-at malicious damage to property and private but unchecked acts of violence are what the writer of the epistle has in mind.

The other evidence brought forward against the traditional authorship is the matter of literary dependence on St. Paul including Ephesians. (Mitton's discussion of this question in chapter xvii of his 'The Epistle to the Ephesians' is mentioned on p. 195.) Beare says the literary relation is 'patent, and all critics are now agreed that the dependence is on the side of I Peter'. With respect to many scholars who accept this, I am not myself completely convinced. The whole tone of the epistle is quite different from St. Paul's, and it does not seem to me that the parallels cited in the text (or in Mitton) *demonstrate* literary relationship. In this context, surely the note on p. 176 that at verse 5 James is secondary to I Peter deserves further comment. Is James later than Pliny?

In this matter of authorship, I think that on points Beare has the advantage of Selwyn and that we are therefore forced to abandon the apostolic authorship, but I would advance this conclusion with some caution if for one reason only. I Peter is the first example of several works bearing the apostle's name. In all the other cases, clear dependence on I Peter shows the reason for the ascription of this title. But what connection did this first letter have with the great apostle that it came to bear his name?

What has been said so far may have revealed some of the strength and weakness of this commentary. In exact matters of language and the details of the historical and cultural background, this commentary is very good. There is a good note on redemption by blood (77-79) though a small monograph on this subject published by the Tyndale Press might well have been consulted; on the corner-stone (99); on *ξύλον* (124); on 'putting away of the filth of the flesh' (149); and some good little details of Roman administration and civil customs (121, 127).

As far as exegesis is concerned, however, this commentary cannot be compared with Selwyn's. The style is rather paedagogic and does not reproduce the warmth of the epistle. The writer does not always seem to have the necessary respect for the sacred text, and there is a lack of profundity in comments such as those on the devil (178), and on the reasons why the early Christians took the attitude they did to slavery (121). On the crucial passages, the Prophets i 10-12, the passages dealing with the doctrine of suffering and the passages referring to the preaching to the dead, we find nothing to compare with the imaginative scholarship and pastoral depth of Selwyn's commentary.

To sum up, this commentary is an excellent corrective to use with others of a more thoughtful and pastoral type, but it is less easy to recommend it as the sole guide to the exposition of this great epistle.

Trivandrum

GEOFFREY PAUL

Banaras and Bethlehem. Some Aspects of the Christian Faith in relation to Hinduism: by Revd. Canon Peter May. C.L.S., Madras. Pp. 43. 90 nP.

The main title dramatizes the argument of the book. It is a deep, though brief, study of certain aspects of the Christian Faith in relation to Hinduism. The fact that two of the chapters of the book appeared as articles in a leading Hindu daily indicates the popularity of the author with Hindus, as well as his acquaintance with Hindu thought and customs. This attempt should stir interest in students of theology for further study of fruitful comparisons.

The book under review contains four chapters: on the meaning of Christmas, the meaning of Good Friday, the Self and the Spirit, and the Trinity and Saccidananda. The author approaches these topics from a standpoint familiar to both the Hindu and the Christian. After stating the common ground, the author clearly points out the specific and distinctive

character, in each case, of the Christian faith. The descent and death of God as man, the spirit and triune nature of God are not in any sense the same in the two religions. The author conducts a penetrating study of the concepts of the Self (prāna, ātmā) and the Spirit (ruach, pneuma): his discussion of the ideas of the Trinity and Saccidananda, his interpretation of Christmas and Good Friday are all very helpful and enlightening. The booklet should be a real incentive to further study on the subject.

Gurukul, Madras

P. DAVID

New Testament Greek. An Introductory Grammar : by E. G. Jay. S.P.C.K. Pp. 350. Rs.14/00.

For the study of Greek in our Serampore B.D. syllabus, Nunn's two volumes *The Elements of New Testament Greek* and *The Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge University Press) are the usual textbooks recommended. The first-named deals mainly with accidence and does not set out to deal much with syntax. The second (on 'Syntax') is found rather too complex for general use. The result is that New Testament syntax is often neglected, and the B.D. student too often ends his course in Greek so lacking in an elementary knowledge of Greek idiom and syntax that we may say that his course has been of no real use to him either as a preparation for translation work into a regional language or for his ministry in general.

The need therefore is for one introductory volume which covers adequate ground. And here the S.P.C.K. are most realistic. They have now put out at least three sensible Grammars which combine accidence and introductory syntax in one volume. In 1928 there was Dana and Mantey's *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* and in 1931 Robertson and Davis's *New Short Grammar of the Greek Testament*. Now they have produced the book under review, by Dr. E. G. Jay, who was until recently the Archbishop of Canterbury's senior chaplain, and has now gone to a teaching post in Canada. In calling such books 'sensible', I realize that the price is high, and we cannot perhaps expect the book under review to be a practicable textbook for our students. But its pattern is the right one, and its contents are good and helpful.

The author insists on taking nothing for granted. He sets out everything in great detail. This makes his volume especially useful for those studying on their own. Where possible, he takes his illustrations and examples from St. Mark's Gospel, as being that most likely to be first studied. It is interesting to note that he advocates in general the use of the 'old' pronunciation of Greek.

A. C. M. H.

Reflections on the Psalms : by C. S. Lewis. Bles. 1958. Pp. vii+151. 12s. 6d.

This is not a formal commentary, but what the author too modestly describes as a book for the unlearned about things in which he is unlearned himself.

He begins by dealing with various difficulties in the use of the Psalter in Christian worship—the paradoxical longing for God's judgment (for we are all sinners), the cursing psalms, the pre-Christian conception of death (a very illuminating chapter). Then he turns to more pleasant things—the joy of worship as it is expressed in the psalms, and the joy found in God's law. After this, we are led to a more difficult question, that of the apparent self-righteousness of the Psalmist, which introduces a valuable discussion of the way a Christian should behave towards those whose standards of conduct are not Christian. A chapter is devoted to the Jewish attitude to Nature, in which the fundamental importance of the Jewish (and Christian) doctrine of creation is brought out, and a chapter on praising God follows.

The book is brought to an end by three chapters on Second Meanings. Do not say, 'No mystical interpretation for me!', and shut the book at this point; for the author sheds a great deal of light on prophecy, as well as on the use of the self-righteous and the cursing psalms by modern Christians.

In an appendix, seven psalms are printed in full (in the version of the English Prayer Book) and there is also a list of the psalms mentioned or discussed.

It might appear that this is a collection of essays rather than a single book; but it is held together by the author's firm grasp of the fact that the Psalmists were inspired by God, and by his concern with the use of the psalms in worship rather than with an academic study of them. It is a book which few people concerned with the conduct of public worship would read without profit and the educated layman who finds the psalms tedious will find in it much to bring freshness into his use of the Psalter.

Calcutta

W. B. M.

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